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HISTORIC DISTRICT LANDMARKS COMMISSION

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CHAIRMAN JAMES AMDAL: ...Commission Meeting, with or without static. First off, I would like to read something because you will notice that we are significantly fewer than normal. Ordinance 6699 M.C.S., establishing the Central Business District, Historic District Landmarks Commission was written in 1978. The Ordinance called for several local institutions to serve as nominating bodies for commission members over the past thirty-six (36) years. Many of these nominating entities, such as the Savings and Loan League and the Retail Merchants Bureau, have dissolved or become defunct.

In an effort to streamline boards and commissions, the mayor's office proposed an amendment to the CBD HDLC Ordinance to update the nominating entities. The revised Ordinance was recently approved by the city council with the goal of creating a commission that reflects the vibrant and mixed used neighborhoods that the four (4) Central Business District...Historic Districts have become. Changes to the Ordinance include the addition of two (2) neighborhood associations as recommended entities, the Warehouse District Neighborhood Association and the Lafayette Square Association, as well as the inclusion of the New Orleans Business Alliance. In the coming months, the mayor's office will be soliciting nominations from the new nominating bodies and appointing new Commission members. Currently, the CBD HDLC has five (5) seated members, therefore, requiring a quorum of three (3). We have four (4); therefore, we have a quorum.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing members of the Commission for their years, and in some cases, decades of service to HDLC. Institutional memory is a very important asset to boards and commissions and their extended tenure allowed for continuity and consistency during a very important period in our history. The outgoing members are John Boyd, Dorian Bennett, Hugo Kahn, Kevin Kelly and Robert Williams.

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So with that, you wanted to take the role, Eleanor?

ELEANOR: Leslie Guthrie present; Keith Twitchell, present; Jim Amdal, present; Wayne Troyer, present; Iran Thompson, absent. We have four (4) members constituting a quorum.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay. Anyone wish to make additions, corrections to the minutes or pass for motion?

MALE SPEAKER: I move we accept the minutes of the February meeting.

MALE SPEAKER: I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay, moved and seconded. All those in favor, vote aye. Okay, so moved. Okay, the first order of business today are a series of demolition applications relative to a proposal to construct a new hotel at the corner of Canal and Tchoupitoulas. Eleanor, you want to read the report, or Bryan? Read the report from the ARC first.

BRYAN: Okay. At the February 25, 2014 ARC Meeting, the ARC agreed that treating the site as an important pivotal node was appropriate, although the proposed new construction must reflect the context of the Historic District, as per the HDLC guidelines. Although the proposal to include galleries responds well to the historical vernacular, the curvilinear form shown does not, as it is more of a caricature of the traditional element.

The lower portion of the composition that rises to seventy-one (71) feet responds well to its context, as well as the proposed canopy at the top of the high-rise tower, which responds interestingly to the trademark building. The concept of an activated spire was considered to be

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an interesting proposal, as was the breaking down of the various elements of the overall architecture. However, the cladding and fenestration should be reworked with a more vertical emphasis. The ARC also agreed that the proposed recessing of the corner building of the corner of the building at Canal and Tchoupitoulas was problematic. Although they appreciate the idea of this is a gathering space, the entrance should be pulled toward the street edge. The reference to the footprint of the existing historic buildings is too arbitrary and theoretical to drive this condition. Although the ARC supports the need to progress, that would involve maximizing utility of this site such as new construction must respect the extant historic architectural fabric.

The tourists who would be accommodated by this new facility to a large degree come to enjoy the authentic and unique architecture of the city. It is not appropriate to demolish this architectural inventory in order to create new buildings that purport to celebrate what was removed. The ARC recommends reworking the proposal to fit within the current undeveloped portions of the site in retaining existing buildings. Although the ARC supports and encourages a blending of historic and contemporary architecture, this should not be mere facadism, i.e., attaching the historic façades or shallow portions thereof to the proposed new construction. This is an opportunity to develop an iconic building for the 21st century. The ARC could also support the proposal of a taller and more slender new building in order to accomplish necessary programmatic needs of the developer. The developer is encouraged to investigate incorporating this more holistically into redevelopment of the existing Sanlin Building. The staff and ARC does not recommend conceptual approval at this time.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay.

BRYAN: Did you mean for me to read the entire report or just the ARC report?

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CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Just the ARC.

BRYAN: Okay.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay. Ed, you want to make your presentation of the project?

BRYAN: Would you like for us to read the report regarding the demolition of the existing buildings?

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Yeah.

BRYAN: Okay. That was, what I just read was the report from the ARC Meeting.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Right.

BRYAN: Okay? So this is the report regarding the demolition...proposed demolition of the six (6) existing buildings. And because, as you said, this is one development, this is going to be read somewhat holistically. The first three (3) buildings are the contiguous row at 105, 109 and 111 Tchoupitoulas. When reviewing demolition applications at properties located within a historic district or at a landmark site, the HDLC uses the following criteria in its evaluation: The historic or architectural significance of the building or structure as designated by its rating; these three (3) buildings are rated as contributing. The importance of the building or structure to the tout ensemble of the area. These buildings maintain a row of three (3) classical style, multi-story commercial buildings important to the history of the commercial development of lower Canal Street.

According to a historical report prepared by William D. Reeves, the buildings on the Square are important because of their age, origin, economic role in the history of New Orleans

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and their place in the cityscape. The report states, quote “The Square is significant initially because a variety of racial and ethnic groups developed the Square in the space of a year after it came on the market.”

Prior to 1840, the Square had been part of the Commons surrounding the Vieux Carre involved in an ownership dispute between the City and the Federal Government. Once the dispute was settled, the City auctioned the lots and a remarkable variety of individuals purchased them. They included one single woman, several Anglo merchants, a French merchant, two African American businessmen, a prominent Jewish merchant, and an Irish merchant. The history of these buildings demonstrates an important aspect of the history of New Orleans in the Antebellum era. Their history establishes that their solid, timeless masonry construction is suitable to many new uses.

The report goes on to state that these buildings were well documented in images, including one by Marie Adrien Persac from 1860 showing this row of buildings exceptionally clearly as part of the continuous line of buildings down Canal Street and around on to Tchoupitoulas. This image is in your drawing packet.

The special character and aesthetic interest that the building or structure adds to the local district at 105 Tchoupitoulas, according to the William D. Reeves history, in 1854 this was the wholesale grocery firm of Speake and McCreary. Sir Henry Morton Stanley, the renowned explorer, came to New Orleans from Liverpool, England in 1854 as an orphan named John Rowlands and worked in the store. The young boy was befriended by an acquaintance of McCreary, and Henry Hope Stanley adopted the boy, giving him his name.

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At 109 Tchoupitoulas, according to the Reeves history, Paul Tulane, for whom Tulane University was later named, purchased this lot in 1840 and erected the building that still stands on this property. Alternatives to demolition that have been evaluated and explored, none have been presented. The difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building or structure because of its design, texture, material or detail due to the craftsmanship and materials, these buildings would be very difficult to reproduce.

The condition of the building or structure, on March 12, 2014, HDLC Field Inspector, Merritt Landry, inspected the buildings and determined these structures to be in good condition and not in imminent danger of collapse. The future utilization of the site is construction of a...proposed construction of a twenty-one (21) story hotel building.

Due to the contributing rating of these three (3) buildings and due to the quality of materials and construction, the staff recommends denial of the application for demolition. Each of these buildings have lengthy case histories of neglect. The owners have been cited for demolition by neglect for many years. This history is outlined by date in your copies of the building's individual property, property summary reports.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay, thank you.

BRYAN: Actually, we...we're not finished yet.

ELEANOR: There's more.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Oh.

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BRYAN: At 422 Canal Street, this building is also shown in the Persac drawing from 1860 as part of the continuous line of buildings down Canal Street and around onto Tchoupitoulas Street. The special character or interest of the building, according to the Reeves' history, Architect James Freret was employed to add the fifth floor and present Romanesque Revival Facade after 1880.

Due to the craftsmanship and materials, this building would be very difficult to reproduce. On March 12, 2014, Field Inspector, Merritt Landry, inspected the building and determined the structure to be in good shape and not in imminent danger of collapse. Due to the contributing status of this building and due to the quality of materials and construction, the staff recommends denial of the application for demolition.

And at 103 Tchoupitoulas and 408 Canal Street, these two (2) buildings are designated as non-contributing. And due to the non-contributing rating of these two (2) buildings, and as these two (2) buildings do not contribute to the tout ensemble of the district, the staff recommends approval of the demolition of these two (2) buildings but does not recommend approval of the new construction. A case history at 103 Tchoupitoulas, July 11, 2012, Commission voted to conceptually approve the development of the site with construction of a two (2) story retail building; building was not constructed.

At 408 Canal Street, January 10, 2014, the owner was found guilty of constructing an inappropriate building on the property without a C of A and fined. This building was subsequently removed.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay. I'm sorry. Mr. James?

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MR. TODD JAMES: Yes, Mr. Jim.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: You want to make your presentation of the proposal?

MR. JAMES: Okay. And I'm assuming we're doing them all in consolidations since I know we have multiple items. I'm Todd James; I'm a Project Manager with Mathes Brierre Architects. We're part of the Mathes ESG joint venture that's here, hired on behalf of Jay Schree Hospitality for the overall, overall presentation of development and for the proposed new 400 Canal Street hotel project.

We've actually been working on this project since December and have been looking at the overall presentation, as you guys see on your screen, showing all of the properties along Tchoupitoulas, as well as along Canal Street, stopping at the 422 Friedberg [phonetic] Building that Bryan referred to earlier. This gives you the primary and actually, if we could go to the floor plan? Thank you.

This slide actually shows what we have proposed for the master site, which includes two (2) Marriott brand hotels; one a Residence Inn and a second as a SpringHill Suites. Both hotels are proposed to be stacked upon each other with the first, first two (2) floors being used as the lobby, as well as a restaurant entity which is proposed along the Tchoupitoulas Street side of the property with a garage entry off of the Common Street side. And proposing four (4) floors of above the second floor; actually, third through fifth floors as parking, coming in compliance with what's required for any building of this size and scale. We have a projected one-hundred-sixty-eight (168) parking stalls that we know we would need to provide for and that's in accordance with the three-hundred-and-seventy-three (373) rooms that we have provided for the site.

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This floor plan shows you the second floor, which shows in green, a continuation of the restaurant entity along Tchoupitoulas. The blue rooms that you see along the bottom of the drawing actually face Canal Street, now used as private dining rooms, which would be small meeting spaces that could be rented from the actual hotel itself, and the beginning of the parking structure that starts on a portion of the second floor and continues up through the fifth floor.

This drawing here actually shows you the rooftop plan which shows the primary tower element facing the Magazine Street side of the property, Canal Street side of the property and Tchoupitoulas, with shared amenity pool at the top of the fifth floor, excuse me, at the sixth floor level, which faces out to Common Street.

As you see in this drawing, it shows that we have a proposed overall primary structural component of two-hundred-and-fifty-five (255) feet for the primary tower with the spire topping out at three-fifty (350). But we also do have the lower contextual design of the, the lower portion of the building which stops at the top of the parking structure at approximately seventy-one (71) feet, which does fall within what we, what we understand to be the primary limitations of seventy-five (75) to eighty-five (85) feet for overall height, and it does speak to the context coming to the buildings that's along Tchoupitoulas as well.

This is a continuation just showing the west elevation is at Magazine, Magazine Street side and the south elevation showing elevation at Common. And just once again, showing some primary contexts of overall scale for the lower portion of the building and the tower above it. You see the DoubleTree Hotel is directly to the left of the drawing which is directly, directly across Tchoupitoulas and the exiting Sanlin Building, which is directly to the right closer to the Magazine Street side of the building.

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And the same thing again at Tchoupitoulas showing the overall context that I was speaking to earlier where the lower, the lower table of the building does fall within proportions to the building directly across Common Street at the 416 Common Street building and also into context with the, with the Custom House which is across Canal Street.

This also shows overall height context, showing some of the heights that we have around the area including the towers around the CBD. The building that you'll see where it shows four-hundred-and-forty (440) feet is actually the height of Canal Place Tower, which is directly catty-cornered from the proposed development and speaks a little bit more to the overall context of how we fit in terms of the other buildings. One of them that you really can't see that well on the screen right now that's at 450 directly behind it is the Sheraton Hotel.

And once again, some of the same images in showing how it relates all the way down to, to Convention Center Boulevard and closer to actually the World Trade Center, as well as coming in the opposite direction, giving you the context to the Sheraton Hotel. And then this is just a general overview image that shows the proposed development.

We do understand a large portion of what the staff has been providing. We do understand what the intentions of the ARC is when we went through the review process. One thing that we are actually...we've, we've looked at it long before, was trying to figure out how to make things work within the overall context of the development. The problem that we have is that this block portion is actually a lot smaller than what you would get with any typical city block if we were to try to put a more rectilinear structure in place. When we deal with the actual tower component using the model brands from Marriott that are proposed for this site, it actually causes us to make the building more expansive. And one thing that we did present at ARC and I

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know it's...and I, and I've said it before and I understand that some Boards don't have the purview to review it, is that in order for the project to be more cost feasible, we need to set up a structure where we have hotel rooms at twenty-two (22) rooms per floor. That's how it helps to make the project actually more feasible for the operators themselves.

One other thing that is driving it, like I discussed earlier, was the off-street parking where we have one-hundred-and-sixty-eight (168) spaces enclosed within a structure. In order for us to make the garage structure work itself and make it as condensed as possible to speak to the overall vernacular to buildings around it, we need to condense it within a five (5) story portion. The existing buildings that are here right now are only three (3) stories in height and the three (3) primary buildings along Tchoupitoulas and the one at 422 Canal, the floor levels do not line up within any of those buildings. I know that there's been attempts in the past with other structures where people have come in and hollowed out buildings, maintained facades only, and made common floor areas, but the problem still comes in when we deal with the parking itself. We would be condensing all of our parking to the third floor, which does...which makes the project infeasible in order for us to provide all of the off-street parking that we believe is necessary.

One of the items that we also have looked at is when you look...when you analyze the market around it in terms of hotels, a lot of the hotels in this area do not provide parking and it's actually creating more of an issue within the CBD for people to park off street. We deal with it ourselves. Our office is, is over at 201 St. Charles, not that far away, and we see how it's really starting to cause impact, even for people who work in the area. They are now having to walk further, and further, and further away from their offices and we're trying to at least do what we can to attribute to this building. We do have a proposed ballroom that's on the top floor of the

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building and sometimes there's going to be special events. We want to be able to provide space for those people who may come to visit the facility to be able to have a place to park.

When we address some of the other concerns, and we understand that there has been some evaluations of the structure; we have actually had our structural engineers evaluate some of the buildings, and while we do understand interpretation of...that it may be by owner neglect, there, there's going to be a continued issue of settlement and foundation issues, primarily at the three (3) buildings at Tchoupitoulas. And we're really concerned about that and how do we properly shore up and try to maintain the facades there. At the end of the day, we just feel as if though it's not cost...it's not reasonable within cost for us to try to maintain those facades and still tie it into the building, especially coming back to the parking structure again. We would need to expand two (2) floors above what is the existing floor plate for these structures.

That's primarily what we're looking at right now and if you guys have any questions, I'll...Mr. Ed Mathes is also here with me from our firm. Shaun O'Laughlin, who's here with the Development team, is here as well if you guys have any further questions for us.

MALE SPEAKER: It seems like the parking situation is driving a lot of what you're proposing. I'd be curious as to know what percentage of visitors to New Orleans actually drive and I'd also be curious to know if you've explored any arrangement with the Canal Place Parking Garage, which as you noted, is cattycorner across the street?

MR. JAMES: We haven't gotten to that point in the process yet and we understand that in order for us to start the process, we started with the application. We haven't ventured out too far into reaching out to other property owners because we didn't want to set a precedent for a situation where we knew it didn't necessarily work within the business plan right now.

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CHAIRMAN AMDAL: The number of parking spaces, is that driven by the, the operator's minimum requirements or is that a city requirement?

MR. JAMES: In some cases, you do have a city requirement where you may have one (1) per two (2) keys and that's also the same situation when we're dealing with some of the operators, specifically Marriott, yes.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay.

MALE SPEAKER: Are there any other variances associated with this project?

MR. JAMES: Yes. It would also require an additional height waiver above the existing eighty-five (85) feet allowable.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Elliot?

ELLIOT: I'd just like to clarify. My interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance was that seventy (70) feet is the limit, as there is a sub-district...there are restrictions on certain streets, Canal Street and Tchoupitoulas Street falling onto these sub-districts?

MR. JAMES: I'm sorry.

MALE SPEAKER: Seventy (70) feet because...

MR. JAMES: Seven- correct.

MALE SPEAKER: ...due to the...

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TODD JAMES: And I, and I believe the Draft CZO has a seventy-five (75) foot requirement right now, which hasn't been finalized.

ELLIOT: The current zoning allows for seventy (70) feet.

MR. JAMES: Seventy (70) feet. Right, I'm sorry.

MALE SPEAKER: And, and what's the height of your building?

MR. JAMES: Overall proposed height with the spire is three-fifty (350).

MALE SPEAKER: Okay.

MR. JAMES: Three-fifty (350) with the spire.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay, Elliot, you want to review the protocol of speakers?

ELLIOT: The rules, policies and procedures state that the...of the Commission state that the order of events is that the staff report, which we've concluded, then the applicant, then proponents, then opponents, then a rebuttal from the proponent, or from the applicant. Speakers are allowed two (2) minutes with a total of...

FEMALE SPEAKER: Fifteen (15).

ELLIOT: ...with a total of fifteen (15) minutes.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay. Okay, since we have received sixty-four (64) emails as of yesterday and I had asked Bryan to summarize those, I think we'll do that at the end rather

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than the beginning. First, are there any proponents in the audience? Okay. So no- [laughter]. All right. Ed, do you want to say something?

ED: [Inaudible: 00:24:19].

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Wait? All right. Therefore, we're going to start with the speakers, Gerald Webre.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Hi, good morning. If you don't mind, we had kind of a set where we wanted to go in order, if that's okay. Everyone did fill out cards so if you don't mind, Mr. Webre wanted to go last, if that's okay, and if we could have one of the other property owners go before him. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: All right. Cassandra.

MS. CASSANDRA SHARPE: Good morning, my name is Cassandra Sharpe and I'm a property owner for twenty (20) years at 610 Julia. Prior to that, I lived in the Quarter for twenty (20) years, and I think the gentleman that just spoke when I was walking in, I think he just talked himself out of what they're trying to do. The Square is too small. There is a parking problem in the area. A great disappointment for me was that they took a small park across the street and turned it into a pick-berry. That didn't help the area. And these three (3) buildings, I have watched them for over forty (40) years. There is something that can be done with them. The height represents what has happened across the street where they've done condos.

Residential – we can't keep denying our residential proponent downtown, and the parking situation is bad. There are things that are being built with no parking but the parking that they have for what they're proposing there, it still causes a problem. Also, we have a height

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restriction. It's on the books, it's there. It's a height restriction. And they want to go two-hundred (200) or more feet above that? I mean, why do we, why do we have...go through the machinations of creating these laws for this historic area and then somebody comes along and says oh, I want to build a three-hundred-and-fifty (350) foot high hotel. And then we, we consider it. We, we shouldn't consider it. It should...it shouldn't get this far. At, at, at the permitting process, they should say, or the zoning process, they should say well, you really can't do this, you're wasting your time and your money.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay, thank you.

MS. CASSANDRA SHARPE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Mike?

MR. MICHAEL DUPLANTIER: Michael Duplantier, I'm at 820 Baronne Street. Like Cassandra, I've been around a while. I was among a handful of people that first proposed historic districting for the Canal Street area. We fought for several years to get this protection for the historic buildings down there. It was not an easy fight, I assure you. And it struck me after looking at this proposal, at least hearing about it, that this is exactly the kind of proposal that historic districting for that region was meant to prevent.

The idea that a developer would come in and just sort of willy-nilly take down several historic buildings, not one (1) that might be in danger of falling, but several of them because it's more convenient to do so than to not do so, in my judgment, was exactly the kind of thing historic districting was set up to prevent. You may recall, maybe you don't, what was happening back in the 1970s and early 80s with these wholesale demolitions of entire blocks in some cases,

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or half-blocks. I had thought, and hoped, that those kind of days were long past, but I find, unfortunately, they are not.

I would share Cassandra's comment about the site. Clearly, this is an over-maximization of the site. This building is being shoehorned into a site that doesn't work. It's already an extraordinarily congested area and the idea that you would have an event destination hotel in that location frankly is, in my judgment, it simply will not work. I did send some comments in and I would second the comments that I previously made and I urge your vote in opposition to the demolitions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you. Patty?

MS. PATTY GAY: Patty Gay. I live at 628 Julian; I work at 923 Tchoupitoulas. I urge you to think that, in denial of such a project you are not going against economic development, and you would be very much voting in favor of the right kind of economic development for our city. And I would like to remind everyone that, I think it was in the early 70s that the City Council passed an Ordinance saying no more hotels in the French Quarter. Well, this did not mean that we wouldn't have any more hotels; it was not an anti-economic development vote at all.

The hotel developers will go where we want them to go, according to our plan. Fortunately, we have good planning in place right now. Planning that has evolved as Mr. Duplantier said, over the years, but also has been evolving in just recent years since the storm. And it's essential to listen and to follow what the citizens have said they would like to see and the City Planning Commission has said in the master plan and in the proposed CZO.

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So there are many wonderful things that can be said about these buildings. I would just like to close by saying I'm often a defender of tourism, the right kind of tourism; the kind of tourism that is...benefits the people who live here and that keeps our city unique. We will not be unique if we continue to demolish buildings for hotels. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Walter?

MR. WALTER GALLAS: Good morning, my name is Walter Gallas. I'm the Executive Director of the Louisiana Landmark Society. We sent in a statement as well on opposing the demolition applications for the three (3) buildings on Tchoupitoulas and the Friedburg Building on Canal. I want to hit a few high points on that and that is that in, in the ARC report was, you know, raised some really good reports, as did the Demolition Application Report, that these buildings on...have not only architectural significance but historic significance in, in our city's past, and the references to Paul Tulane and Sir Henry Morton Stanley and James Freret are all there.

The buildings that, the three (3) buildings on Tchoupitoulas take me back to my days on the HDLC staff when we had numerous citations for demolition by neglect against these buildings. And what's so ironic, I was just by there on Monday going to a meeting, and it's interesting that on the ground-floors that leads to the buildings, all of these, all of these buildings are in commerce at, at this point and, and the Bill Reeves comment and the Demolition Application or the Demolition Report was significant about how resilient these buildings are and that they their construction really would be suitable for...continuous to be suitable for new uses and that it would be difficult to reproduce their craftsmanship. I think that's really right on target. The buildings exceed the height as it was already said by a number of previous speakers and we're

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trying to now bring before you, or the developer is trying to bring before you, something that isn't even...that the plans don't even call for that kind of scale development on this site.

Look at Picayune Place, and I think we're going to hear from Picayune Place pretty soon about, you know, the scale that's there and the context that this building would, would rise in and it's, it's not there. There isn't...that's not the context that we want; a scale that goes up to three-hundred-and-fifty (350) feet with a spire.

And finally, and it's really important to us to say that there shouldn't be any kind of a quote, unquote "compromise solution" here where somebody says okay, we're going to retain the facades but then we're going to shoot up twenty-one (21) stories behind that. That's not preservation. These buildings should be retained intact. You've got some open space there from that surface parking, let's work on filling in that Square with appropriate scale development that will fill out...finally fill out that Square appropriately again. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay. Nancy Murray?

MS. NANCY MURRAY: My name is Nancy Murray and I'm the owner of 418 Common Street. And I'm very sympathetic with the challenges of renovating the buildings that we see here because that's exactly what happened with my building. We had serious water intrusion issues and deteriorating structural elements but with the approval and encouragement of the HDLC, we put together a team of people that worked on it and brought it up to code and now it really reflects the historic...its historic roots, both inside and out. And I think that can be done as well to these historic buildings, and I urge you to deny this application, and thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you. Betsy Stout?

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MS. BETSY STOUT: Betsy Stout, 619 Nashville Avenue. I'm also a trustee with the Louisiana Landmark Society. These are quintessential New Orleans commercial buildings from the 1840s. They are exactly like those in the French Quarter, just on the other side of Canal Street if you walk across. They provide continuity from the French Quarter to the Business District that flourished in the early 19th century. It tells us that New Orleans is not just the French Quarter. It's not unlike if you're in Rome and you go to the Forum and then you walk outside in other neighborhoods, you see remnants of Old Rome and you say, oh yes, this, this is New Orleans; this is, this is what it is not only in the French Quarter, but elsewhere. And there are very few of these buildings left in this area.

A lot of this area has turned into large, ugly boxes. These buildings could be incorporated into whatever use is planned. They already show a lower elevation on the street so use these buildings that are here, that are, that are wonderful and, and become an asset to our city rather than something that detracts. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Michelle?

MS. MICHELLE KIMBALL: Good morning, Michelle Kimball with the Preservation Resource Center at 923 Tchoupitoulas Street. Patty did not mention but we also have an interest in 416 Common Street as PRC has the facade easement on that project. We hold our property owners to the highest standard with the secretary of the interior standards for historic rehabs. So these people have jumped through hoops in order to have the highest and best possible renovation done to that project.

It also speaks to the kind of, of outlook that we've had on adjacent properties that have been renovated and that HDLC has reviewed. Always, property owners are held to very high

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stakes and we feel the same should be used in the case of these historic structures. They certainly are...while they are in commerce right now, they are not being used to their highest and best use. I was at the site yesterday and it appears, at best, the upper floors are being used for storage; at worst, they are currently vacant. But as we know at looking at Picayune Place and the Acres of Diamonds study that was done by the Downtown Development District in the 90s, there is a large demand for residential in the CBD and even along Canal Street, which really generates an opportunity here...an economic opportunity at this site rather than a deterral [phonetic] for redevelopment. So we'll ask that today you please deny this request and not delay any further. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you. James Schlesinger?

MR. JAMES SCHLESINGER: I'm James Schlesinger. I live at 416 Common in Unit 8. Appreciate the opportunity to present my view to the Commission this morning on this very important matter to me and my neighbors. Two (2) years ago, my company gave me the opportunity to relocate. I had Houston and New Orleans as a choice. I chose New Orleans and with the opportunity that I can walk to work. The reason I chose New Orleans is because New Orleans places a high emphasis on preservation of its buildings, protecting the character and the ambiance of the area.

A key part of my decision to purchase at 416 Common was knowledge that this building's located within the Picayune Place Historical District, and that District is protected by this Commission, and that the character and ambiance of the area will remain unchanged and any development will respect the area's historical significance.

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Similarly, the buildings across the street from me, being in the Canal Street Historical District, would have similar protections by the Commission and by restricting any development building height limitations.

All of these things gave me a comfort that my investment in living in New Orleans, moving here, and being able to enjoy the city, walk to work, would be preserved and that I made the right decision. I do desire to see improvements to that area like all of my neighbors do. But for the reasons I've outlined, I would like to see redevelopment stick within the current rules and regulations and for that reason, I urge the Commission to deny the proposal to demolish these buildings. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you. Richard Stone?

MR. RICHARD STONE: Good morning, my name is Richard Stone and I reside at 416 Common Street, which is directly across from this proposed development. I've been a commercial real estate broker in New Orleans for over thirty-five (35) years and I was the former Director of Commercial Sales and Leasing at Latter and Blum, which is a position I had for over twenty (20) years.

In the course of that work, I regularly work with commercial investors and developers and while I feel that reasonable accommodation should be provided to developers who bring on significant projects that are of benefit to the community, I'm here today to object in the strongest possible manner as to the demolition of these particular buildings.

I was at the Neighborhood Participation Program meeting that was held in February, whereby the developer stated their case for the demolition of these properties. And the bottom-

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line was...the primary reason provided was one, out of economic hardship, that the buildings, despite now being currently rented to commercial tenants, supposedly could not be renovated in a way to make economic sense. The presenter showed us slides of various buildings issues that needed to be addressed and stated that the cost to, to remedy these things just would not make sense, and they specifically pointed out that the cost to renovate the property would be in excess of the current value of the property, as if that is something that is not found in the normal course of everyday business of renovating buildings. And it is, in fact, part of the, the, the normal way that these buildings are renovated. In fact, if one wants to avail themselves to the benefits of historic federal tax credits, they, in effect, have to spend more than is the current value of the property.

I have sold buildings nearby that have been in far worse shape for far more money than the purported values that these developers have claimed that these buildings are worth, even post-renovation, and I can assure you if these buildings were put on the market today, there would be any number of potential suitors to buy and renovate these properties in the manner that they should be renovated and to gain economically from that.

I think it should be noted that the historic status of these buildings was in place well prior to the acquisition by the current owner. They have been neglected for years and I don't believe that we now should reward that type of activity by allowing them, these properties which are located in really one of the major gateways into the city, the convergence of the French Quarter, the Central Business District and the Warehouse District, that they should be allowed willy-nilly just to tear them down.

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Our economy right now is on the up-swing and we, as everyone knows, many of the country's best and brightest and youngest entrepreneurs are choosing to come here and live and work in our downtown area. These are the people who are going to be planting the seeds for our region's continued growth and prosperity for years to come have chosen to settle here, precisely because the culture and heritage fostered by our unique, unique ties to the past.

Economic growth need not be at the expense of tearing away at the fabric of our economy...of our, of our historic nature. My message to the development team today, some of whom who've traveled over a thousand miles to be here, is thank you for your interest in, in doing something here, but you need to slow down, take a step back and come up with an alternative plan for your hotel so they can be integrated into the surrounding neighborhood in a way that doesn't ravage our vital and historic city center. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Next, Bruce Boulware?

MR. BRUCE BOULWARE: Good morning, my name is Bruce Boulware. I also live at 416 Common. My wife and I have become full-time residents of New Orleans within the last two (2) years, after having a second home here and our primary home in Napa, California for a number of years before that. We did that because despite she being a California native, we really like living here and we really like where we live.

You have individual letters from nine (9) of our ten (10) homeowners in your meeting materials. They all provide, I think, very important perspectives that each of us have. All ten (10) of our homeowners unanimously and vehemently oppose destruction of the historic buildings, as well as the proposed hotel. However, any project that preserves the buildings,

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complies with the restrictions and has adequate good neighbor provisions, would receive our full support. We would like to see something done with the property across the street.

416 Common was developed by Joy Bollinger; full compliance with all of the restrictions, complete responsiveness to architectural direction from your Committee and with assurance that any development across the street would also be required to comply with all restrictions then and now in place. The building received a Historic Preservation Award in 2004. Every owner at the time of purchase inquired about what would happen across the street and on learning of the restrictions, we were all satisfied that our investment and our quality of life would be reasonable protected. And I can assure you that depending on the timing of any suggestion, to do a project such as that is proposed would preclude a development of the building as...or purchased by any of us individually.

The Canal/Tchoupitoulas site had restrictions in place when acquired. The historic buildings have been neglected for many years and demolition is certainly not the correct approach, so we collectively urge you to reject this proposal and we respectively thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you. George Cain?

MR. GEORGE CAIN: My name is George Cain. I'm the President of the Medallion Building Condominium Association located at 441 Gravier, and I'm here on behalf of the entire Association to oppose this for the reasons set forth in the ARC Report and the prior speakers.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you. Jack?

MR. JACK STEWART: Hi, my name is Jack Stewart and I'm President of the Lafayette Square Association. The boundaries of our neighborhood touch this neighborhood at

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Poydras Street and we were asked by several people to come and make a comment. I went to the presentation on this building and at that public hearing that I went to, the Neighborhood Participation thing, Mr. Bollinger talked about how he had to do a...well, he was limited in the size of the penthouse that he could put on his building and he thought that people on Canal Street would be limited in the same way with anything that they came up with. So what we're setting this up for is a situation where this is not equal justice before the law and I think that's going to probably end up being grounds for a lawsuit and a very good well, well situated lawsuit if, if this comes to pass.

One of the reasons that, that we're opposed to it is because of the, the intensive activity that one of the objections that I made at that comment was the intensive activity that it's going to converge on this space. It's a relatively small, almost triangular site, and it's going to have to really have a lot of service vehicles and everything all the time since it's a restaurant, a parking garage and two (2) hotels.

We're familiar with part of our neighborhood in the adjacent office corps and, and part of the Picayune Place development that's on Camp Street that we frequent a lot, and all the way from, from Lafayette Square to Canal Street, there's a huge amount of, of loading docks, loading zones, freight zones. But in spite of all of those, and they're, and they're quite large, there's like about twenty-three (23) slots. The trucks and the service trucks are parked on the sidewalk and commercial alley. They are parked, double-parked on Camp Street and the other service areas to the building. They're blocked crossing the driveway and this is going to be a much more intensive traffic use going on in this place than they can possibly be accommodated on the small size and perimeter of this site. And we think there's going to probably be trucks and cars

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double-parked on, on Canal Street, Tchoupitoulas and possibly blocking Common Street at all times.

So I think this is strategically going to be a very tough operation to do in a civilized way and I think that's why the zoning is, is what it is because the people that came up with the zoning knew that it was going to be very hard to, to service something this large on this site. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you. Nicole?

MS. NICOLE WEBRE (PHONETIC): Commissioners, if you don't mind, my father is going to speak; he did fill out a card, and then I'm going to follow. Thank you.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you for having us up here before you. I bought the property in the 80s, been paying taxes on it all these years, I want to make it residential. After Katrina, my daughter even lived there for some time. But I object to, to this entire project. There are plenty of places they can build hotels, not on a small area like this. We'll have the garbage in our, in our front yard, garbage trucks; all the, all the service trucks for the restaurant and all. It would be horrendous. I certainly wouldn't have...I paid ninety-five-thousand dollars (\$95,000.00) for this property in the 80s. We spent a lot of money developing it; now they're bringing in a lot of tax money for the, for the city, and this is the way it should be. It's a residential. It should remain residential on our street.

Now across the...but they could do it upstairs. There are three (3) empty stories there. They could actually put apartments in there and get high rent, facing Canal Street, so people can watch the parades and all. So I really object to it. We had restrictions we had to follow and, and I think they should follow the same thing.

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CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you.

MALE SPEAKER: And as a practicing lawyer, I assure you, a, a suit will be filed.

MS. WEBRE: Good morning again. Nicole Webre (phonetic). I'm here on behalf of my father for 420 Common Street. My address is 6811 Memphis Street; however, I have lived at 420 Common Street for several years after Katrina, and even recently up until a year ago I was building my current home.

Having lived there, I can tell you some stories. It's a lively neighborhood. I could tell you some really funny stories, some of those that are not appropriate for public forum. However, the one thing that is great about our area, Picayune Place, is that we have maintained, even amidst all the craziness of Canal Street and downtown New Orleans, we've been able to maintain this nice, quaint residential area and it's a pocket that we need to preserve. It's a residential pocket, low to medium density, mixed use. You cannot find that anywhere else off of Canal Street, and this makes that area unique. And people don't come to New Orleans for a three-hundred-and-fifty (350) square tall hotel. People come to New Orleans because we've been able to preserve what is unique and what you can't find in other cities.

So I'm asking for that to be preserved today; to preserve Picayune Place and to hold the developer to the current regulations. And just to point out something we talked about earlier, it was mentioned that the block portion on Canal, this block portion that's up for, for debate, is smaller than other blocks. I'd like to also point out that as recently as two (2) years ago, the last demolition for a large area on Canal Street was 1031 Canal Street, the former Woolworth Building. That block is much larger; it does not abut a residential neighborhood. The block behind it is parking garages and some commercial use. And those developers were held to, according to

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the City Council, they were required to do seventy (70) feet along the Iberville frontage. Although it wasn't a residential area, they were still held to that seventy (70) foot requirement along Iberville. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay. So now we have two (2) speakers who are for the project, Stanford Latter.

MR. STANFORD LATTE: My name's Stanford Latter. You know, I, I read the mission that you all have before you. It says here that they preserve and enhance the quality of neighborhoods, strengthening the city's economic base, stimulating the tourist industry, increasing property values, fostering economic development and encouraging growth. This project, if not approved, is going to preserve not only some old, junky buildings, but it's going to preserve the uses that are there; the massage parlor, t-shirt shops, package liquor store, surface parking lot. I, I just...I hope that, that y'all would consider your mission when making your decision. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Shaun O'Laughlin?

MR. SHAUN O'LAUGHLIN: Hello members of the council. My name is Shaun O'Laughlin, I'm with a company called Wischermann Partners. I am representing the landowner as a co-developer to this project. I could have spoke earlier. I am not necessarily here to say a presentation but this is not a project that we willy-nilly thought of. We actually had a different site in mind with this project and really a different neighborhood view.

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For a person that comes to this city and experiences it, you have an industry here that is very strong for tourism and with tourism you have nearly forty-thousand (40,000) hotel rooms, and you can support more with the size of your Convention Center and your French Quarter Districts.

We thought of this project as a support and a catalyst to the Canal Street frontage and that entire corridor. We actually met with members of the DDD and the Mayor's Office, and we were advised to sup- to push that boundary and bring storefronts to that road. This project was to be a gateway of the merging of three (3) important districts: the Convention Center District, the CBD and the French Quarter. I cannot build anything in the French Quarter. I cannot find any more sites in the Convention Center District that will support a rate of a hotel. The CBD is the key to supporting your industry that needs to flourish and grow.

Stanford was absolutely correct. If you do not do development that supports the industry along Canal, you will preserve what is there now and it will stay there. There are not businesses that will come and pay a correct fee for the value inside of those buildings. So you get the businesses that are there now. We talk...I've heard about one (1) restaurant versus there are four (4) there right now. There's garbage for all four (4) of those restaurants. This is a chance to reorganize that block.

We've heard from the community, which is primary residential, and I, I completely understand all of those views. But really, the challenge here for the city is to make a decision about are we going to develop the Canal corridor with retail and storefronts or are we going to develop the Canal corridor with residential? That's really the question. I have no, no further comments.

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CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you. All right, finally, Bryan, I'd asked you yesterday to summarize the sixty-four (64) emails that had come in as of yesterday. You want to do that?

BRYAN: Sure. I'm, I'm going to briefly quote from several of them.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: All right.

BRYAN: This is the...and these are all exact quotes from these emails. "We would only expect the future development and/or renovation projects in the same zoning area would be held to the same exact standards as required during the renovation of our building." This is referring to 416 Common Street.

"This is necessary to preserve the historic architectural fabric that our city has become known for. We strongly feel that the proposed destruction of these historic buildings just because it is allegedly economically unfeasible to save the much neglected buildings would be an insult to those of us who have worked so hard and invested so much to preserve the cultural and historic elements of New Orleans."

"Economic growth need not come at the cost of tearing away at the fabric of the city. The resurgence of our economy in recent years is evidence of that."

"Our greatest advantages as a city are our culture and history. To keep thriving as we move forward, we need to preserve our assets while still being progressive. Demolishing historic structures does not serve that goal. The most green a large or small construction project can be is to refurbish an existing structure."

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“I would like for the members to please be aware that Common Street, at this proposed hotel site, is mainly a high-end residential area. The hotel rendering submitted shows the garbage truck service, drive loading dock area directly across from our building’s entry lobby.”

“The proposal ignores the importance of these four (4) historic buildings which have stood on this block since the 19th century. Not only do the buildings have architectural significance, they are associated with important figures from our city’s past. African-American businessmen, Julien Clovis and Joseph Dumas; explorer, Sir Henry Morton Stanley; philanthropist, Paul Tulane; and architect, James Freret.”

And as you said, this was just an excerpt from sixty-four (64) that we received as of yesterday, and we’re still receiving them this morning.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: All right. Ed, do you want to make a statement? Okay.

MR. JAMES: Yeah, just...I’m sorry Mr. Chair. I just wanted to provide some points of clarity that I actually didn’t bring up during the presentation, so I apologize about that. One of the items that we have tried to do to incorporate some of the architectural character is to maintain the original granite colonnades at the 111, 109 and 105 buildings at the ground level to still help to attribute to the overall scaling that presents some of the preservation that we, we do believe does need to happen in some areas. It does come back to the overall scale of the buildings, like I stated earlier about it’s only three (3) floors. The three (3) floor, the three (3) story portion does not work within what we need in order to provide the primary parking structure, as we talked about within the first five (5) floors.

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The second item that I had was also addressing the service vehicles and Shaun eluded to it earlier. Right now, you do have at least four (4) different...actually, you have six (6) businesses that operate at ground level in that area right now. With the consolidation of this site, we're providing the service drives to be provided on-site within the building structure itself. It's not doors that work. Originally, we did have a plan that showed the doors facing the 416 building. We have since come back and revised that plan and we're actually now integrated that service area within the building itself so that vehicles can park within a site and not be exposed to the street.

One other item that we're doing is the recession at the curbs along Canal Street so that we can have a valet cue and that vehicles are not blocking Canal Street. I come up and down Canal Street all the time and I see it daily and I actually get frustrated when it's only two (2) lanes of traffic when it should be three (3). The same thing exists on the, on the Common Street side. We're strictly allowing that to be the access for those two, two service drives and the down ramp and the access to the parking garage only. This will now be the primary vehicular access point for someone coming to the actual site. So just wanted to give that point of clarity in terms of overall parking layout and how the infrastructure really is being supported for the site, and I know Mr. Mathes at least wanted to provide two (2) comments.

MR. ED MATHES: I'm Ed Mathes with Mathes Brierre Architects and I apologize, I've got the New Orleans...whatever you get. I've been practicing architecture in this city for many years and this is a constant problem. It's like if you've bought a piece of property next to Tulane or Loyola University and then all of a sudden, they wanted to build something. Voila! It happens all the time. The University was there first.

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Canal Street is going to develop, I would hope. How it develops is up to everybody involved in this city to make it develop the right way. It was even mentioned when we presented to the ARC. One member of the ARC said he liked the building, subject to a certain amount of tweaking. It happened to be made by Lee Ledbetter, that comment, an architect who I respect greatly.

Many cities would give their eyeteeth for somebody from outside of the city to come and spend seventy (70) to one-hundred (100) million dollars in their city. We have long had the reputation for not doing that. And I would submit that if New Orleans is going to continue to grow and provide the types of places for people to live, work downtown, all around town, we have to get where we're accepting people coming here, working with them, to do the best job we can possibly do.

I appreciate the comments made by the opponents. I would probably make the same comments if I lived across the street, but Canal Street did not just appear. Canal Street has been there. It is going to develop. DDD right now is trying to develop the second, third, fourth floors in some cases, into residential units above the commercial property. That idea has been around...I think the AI had a charrette on that when I was a young architect. That was a long time ago and it has not happened because you cannot get the property owners in this city that abut each other, each with thirty (30) foot strips, to agree on the time of day. So lots of comments have been made but people come to New Orleans to, to see the ambiance of the Quarter or the architecture.

If I'm not mistaken, I just heard from WWII that they are now the major reason for tourists to come to New Orleans. Occupying...co-existing with that ambiance. We need all

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sorts of attractions for people to come to New Orleans, whatever they are. And when they come, we have to accommodate them. And as Shaun pointed out, they searched for a site for this hotel. This one (1) piece of property happens to have been put together by one (1) person. That makes it attractive for development. That's all.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Thank you.

MR. MATHES: Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay, I think we have heard everyone that has submitted speaker cards. I suggest that we entertain a motion and vote.

MALE SPEAKER: I will move to reject the proposals for demolition with the exception of is it 408 Canal is the junky...

MALE SPEAKER: 408 Canal and, and 103 Tchoupitoulas were both the non-contributing buildings...

MALE SPEAKER: Okay.

MALE SPEAKER: ...on the corner.

MALE SPEAKER: I'm perfectly fine with demolition of those buildings. I find this proposal staggering that you would propose tearing down four (4) antebellum buildings with a long history to them that are not junky and in the name of economic hardship, that's not what this city wants. There are many visions and many opportunities for economic development. Destroying our history and the service of that is not the charge of this Commission.

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I've been on this Commission for awhile now and I've rarely seen a project that, to me, seems to be such a gross violation of what we're trying to do here in New Orleans. I think the points about a double standard that other developers all over the district have been held to is a critical one. The developers here must be held to that same standard. This is also a blatant disregard for the zoning and the master plan. We can't have that. We cannot have that.

MALE SPEAKER: Before I second that, which I will, I just wanted to make a couple of comments. You know, when I first heard about this project I was actually excited about seeing that parking lot developed because I see that as a...those type of vacant sites along Canal Street and in the CBD as having great potential. I also enjoy the, and appreciate, the combination of contemporary architecture with historic. But I always have a problem when a project is based off of an idealized efficiency that might come from a maximizing of an...of a, a hotel operator's program for operations.

There's something wrong with that when that leads towards a wholesale demolition of a block. I was really appreciative of that historic rendering that we saw showing how that whole block would be unified. And I would think that if a developer really wanted to be a part of New Orleans, and if they wanted to contribute to its economic development as well as a tourist draw, then they would actually look at trying how to enhance that block. Fill-in that parking lot, connect it with the Sanlin Building, and then develop a whole concept of that block that would recreate that 19th century effect.

So I'll second that motion for approving the, the demolition for 103 Tchoupitoulas and 408 Canal and rejecting the demolition for the other properties.

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CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay, it's been moved and seconded. Let's vote. All those in favor? Thank you very much. Now, we've got election of officers.

MALE SPEAKER: The appeal...the applicant's have ten (10), ten (10) calendar days from the date of this meeting to appeal in writing to the City Council..

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay. Now, do we want to do election of officers?

MALE SPEAKER: Yes, as the makeup of the Commission has changed, we have lost our Vice Chairman and so we felt it was important to do an election of officers so that we have the position filled. In all likelihood, we'd recommend doing this again once we have...

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: The full Commission.

MALE SPEAKER: ...filled out the full Commission, but in the meantime, we felt that it was important to have that position filled.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay. You want to do it? Okay, can I make a nomination?

MALE SPEAKER: Sure. Sure.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Okay, I nominate Wayne. And moved and seconded and it's going down. [Laughter.]

MALE SPEAKER: I think the vote works.

CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Yeah. All those in favor of Wayne Troyer as a Vice Chair?

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CHAIRMAN AMDAL: Yeah. Okay. It's been moved, seconded and it's done. Thank you.

[End of Audio]

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Page	Quotes
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